Child Welfare Transformation

Insights Phase in partnership with Root Inc.

The Child Welfare Transformation seeks to dramatically increase the number of children and families served in home. Root Inc., a partner of WI DCF, engaged 13 counties to understand decision-making supports and mindsets that are differentiating counties along this journey of transformation. This handout complements Root's presentation of Insights findings and serves as an aid to leaders in reflecting on their own progress and areas of opportunity.

Family-First Agency Cultures: Things are already underway, and leaders have been proactive with implementation.

Behaviors

1. The shift is already happening in culture and decision-making.
2. To leaders, this is a system-level change; to workers, it's "business as usual."

Critical Questions

- Are my people unfazed by this strategic shift? Or are they skeptical about our ability to overcome resource constraints?
- Do I understand the system-level changes needed for this shift?

Self-Reflection

How consistent are these behaviors in your county?

Super consistent!   *Mostly, yes!*   *Somewhat…*   *This doesn't sound like us*   *Not sure; I might need to gather feedback*

Notes

Change-Ready Families: Workers are open-minded and optimistic, and see themselves as drivers of success.

Behaviors

3. Counties share similar conceptual goals toward families but take different stances with respect to how they engage.
4. Workers are more likely to center themselves as change agents with skills to arrive at desired outcomes.

Critical Questions

- Do my people have the skills to feel confident in the information they receive and their ability to engage a family in genuine behavior change?
- Is the approach with families more directive or one of partnership?

Self-Reflection

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Notes

Safety-Driven in Decision-Making: Workers think deeply and broadly to better understand the intricacies and backstory of a case. Everything is in pursuit of isolating and controlling safety.

Behaviors

5. In home is (almost) always an option.
6. Enabling in-home plans means thinking deeply and searching broadly.
7. Workers are safety driven, always assessing how to pinpoint safety and implement sufficient controls.
8. Workers recognize that they can always improve in their practice regarding these topics.

Critical Questions

- With complex and/or AODA cases, how easily can workers isolate safety from risk?
- How often are workers searching for non-biological contacts for insight or support?
- Do workers "know how a situation will play out," or do they approach each case with fresh eyes?

Self-Reflection

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Notes

Service Array: All counties recognize shortages in service, but creativity and work to develop in-home services differentiate Advanced counties.

Behaviors

9. Creativity in funding allocation and types of supports enable success.
10. Prefer readily available, in-home services that support the whole family.

Critical Question

- To what extent have you evaluated your own budget and/or reached out to other counties for ideas regarding creative funding of basic needs and/or support services for families?

Self-Reflection

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Notes

External Stakeholders: They are part of the picture but not viewed as a barrier. The state should play a supporting and facilitating role versus a directive one.

Behaviors

11. External stakeholders are part of the picture, and not viewed as a barrier to overcome when keeping children in home.
12. Leaders desire for the state to facilitate best practice sharing with other counties, and to provide overall training support.

Critical Questions

❓ How much focus is spent on the court system relative to other community partners?

❓ Is there a collaborative relationship with law enforcement? And/or is there at least one judge who's an ally?

Self-Reflection

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Notes

Proactive Leaders: Leaders focus internally and on developing the service provider network. They understand the implications of this shift for worker realities.

Behaviors

13. Leaders focus on what they can control.
14. Leaders understand the importance of reducing workload and working with service providers to enable success.

Critical Question

❓ What recent efforts have been taken to reduce workload, alleviate bureaucratic burdens for workers, or strengthen a service provider network?

Self-Reflection

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Notes

Effective Teams: Teams serve as critical means of training and collaboration, and help to manage workload burdens.

Behaviors

15. Supervisors use a team environment to enable workers to gain critical learning and to collaborate on time-intensive case plans.

16. Team environments support decision-making and workloads.

Notes

Critical Question

❓ During meetings, do supervisors cascade information and direct workers? Or do they facilitate group learning and idea sharing?

Self-Reflection

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Supported Workers: In the end, workers feel supported by the agency and have the skills to carry out the (time-intensive) work.

Behavior

17. Everyone collectively manages the risk and responsibility of in-home decisions. Nothing falls solely on the worker.

Notes

Critical Questions

❓ To what extent do workers feel that the decision-making risks fall on them?

❓ When was the last time you defended or championed a team's in-home case decisions?

Self-Reflection

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